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## ROUGHING IT.

WALKING in Brittany is no bad way of spending a few weeks of a summer's holiday, for those who love to see a new country and a new people, who can find pleasure in ransacking quaint old towns, and delight in inspecting the time-worn traceries and curious traditions of ancient churches. This year, O happy bachelor, to whom a month's recess from labour shall have been conceded, after you have selected your travelling-companion, and purchased your needless necessities, when nothing shall remain for you but to choose a field for your wanderings, take my advice, and give a few minutes of your attention to the idea of seeing Brittany, and I think I can promise you some remuneration for your trouble, even after you shall have quarrelled, as you probably will, with your travelling-companion; and after you shall have come to the conclusion, as I hope you will, that after all there is no place to hold a candle to Old England. But let me premise, first, that you are a person who can make up your mind to be put out at no amount of roughing it which you may have to encounter, for you will have to rough it beyond all question, if you mean thoroughly to see the country, to get away from the big towns, and study the people in their native primitiveness. You are not likely to find a large and comfortable hotel at your journey's end, each day; no smiling landlord to bid you welcome; no clean-looking iron bed to receive your exhausted limbs, my friend; so, if you mean walking, just pocket your tooth-brush, and tramp it with no other luggage scarcely. You must enter on your lot for better for worse; your razor will be superfluous weight, and your bath-sponge will mock you, as it bulges over the largest tea-cup you are likely to find for a tub. *Ergo*, my words are to the strong of stomach, and let others stay away.

The latter is a course which, for the future, I am thinking of pursuing myself; and this from a total want of the qualities which I have been but just now advocating as necessary. My friend with whom I have been recently travelling, assures me,

and I am inclined to think with truth, that I lack a certain asperity of taste. A diet of broad beans, and a bed on mother-earth, so there be no rain under the canopy of the sky, would detract but little, I think, from my pleasure, provided the discomfort be in company with a cheerful friend, and rendered less distressing by the moderate consumption of tobacco; but there are in me a native horror of a suspicious-looking couch, a sneaking weakness for such a modicum of water as will enable me to perform my usual ablutions, and a keen desire for an analysis of strange and uncomely food, which combine to mar my comfort at uncouth country hostels. I had often contested this point with John, my friend in question, and have felt very sore at the notion of his supposing me to be cast in a more effeminate mould than himself; but I fear I confess to myself occasionally, with great secrecy, that such is nevertheless the case. I recollect, on one occasion, so bitter had I grown at his derogatory arguments, that it induced a short separation from him during our travels, that I might, so to speak, win my spurs. For three mortal hours he had been sketching, in water-colours, a rather pretty church in Brittany, and I, who have no more notion of drawing than has a cow, was beginning to get a trifle sick of it.

'How much longer do you intend to be?' I asked with growing impatience, for though I had smoked two cigars it wasn't lively.

'I can't say,' replied John coolly. 'To tell you the truth, my dear fellow, I am beginning to think I shall have to sponge most of it out, after all; in fact, I am thinking of doing it over again—that belfry isn't straight, the porch is out of drawing, and that peasant-girl is in the wrong place; besides, she's ugly.'

This was too much. 'I've been thinking, John, that as it's not too lively watching you sketch, I shall take my rod, and look for some fishing.'

'I wouldn't advise you; you won't find any within fifteen miles.'

'Well, even so, what then?'

'What then? Why, you would have to sleep out somewhere; and as you wouldn't have me to take

care of you, that wouldn't do, you know, old fellow.'

'I must confess, I don't see what that has to do with it.'

'Well, you know I mean you won't shift for yourself without a companion; well, you are not much of a fellow for roughing it.'

This was a sore. 'I'll back myself to rough it against you, my boy, any day.'

'Nevertheless, you are not cut out for roughing it, and I shouldn't advise you to go; besides, I don't know that it is quite safe; you don't know where you are going to, or what people you will be among—you may be robbed, you knows.'

'Robbed—nonsense; robbed, indeed,' replied I, not in too pleasant a mood. 'I'll tell you what, I mean to go, so I'll take my chance of that.'

Well, it's hard to quarrel with John; these painters are such cool collected fellows over their work generally, and John never loses his temper. He merely stopped for one moment, and with a little disappointment in his tone, answered good-naturedly: 'Very well, old fellow; be it so. I daresay this sketching does bore you; and as I want to do that bit beyond the farmhouse after this, and just take down some of the points of that old château we passed about two miles from here, our plans will just suit each other. Be back to-morrow, if you can, though; I hope by then this frightful peasant-girl will be a trifle prettier.'

And then I lit another cigar, and again for a few minutes watched John's great bold masterly touches, as the lights and shades were brought out on the old gray stone, and the foliage almost seemed to quiver on his paper over the head of the graceless nymph. I rather repented my severity; but I felt that John's glove had been down, and that I had picked it defiantly up. *Vestigia nulla retroruram.* I must go. Half an hour of inquiry and preparation, and two or three hours' journey partly on foot, partly in the uncouth cart of a beneficent villager, brought me, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, to the banks of a somewhat promising-looking stream—brought me to the banks of the stream, and left me alone in the wildest of countries, with little baggage but my fishing-rod, and with only a moderate knowledge of the language of the country to shift for myself. My first care being for my sport, I commenced a perambulatory survey of the stream in search of a likely spot; a duty for which I was competent, my early capture of a brace of big trout in part proved. Ere the shades of night had fallen on the bleak hills around me, my cunningly devised flies had proved indigestible food to many a finny innocent; but whilst they had been dancing, and bobbing, and spurning their insidious evolutions on the surface of the water, I had been too much wrapped up in the excitement and pleasure of the sport to remember that I was just then in a position far less homely than that occupied by a pauper on a London doorstep. As I tied up my rod, however, and felt in my pocket for that robust friend of mine, my cigar-case, it did occur to me it would be well, ere I should be quite benighted, that I should seek an inn. Inn, indeed! I looked to the front, and none was there; behind me—not a roof to be seen; to the left, to the right—but all was bleak hill and dale, and great dark forest of beech and fir, lit up here and there by patches of bright gorse and many-tinted heather and bracken. Food for the eye, truly, a copious and luxurious

feast for the lovers of nature, but, to my jaundiced eye, shorn of much of its beauty, owing to the absence of anything to relieve the landscape in the shape of a house. The ugliest of the ugly among those hideous little builders' speculations which we so deplore, as they crop up here and there to mar our English views, would have been to me just now by far the most graceful bit of the wild scenery before me. To stand, however, on the banks of a stream about which there already hangs a mist, in a light summer shooting-jacket, is at best an occupation which is apt to pall upon one; and the solution of one of the earliest riddles of my childhood impressed upon me the fact of the stationary and somewhat disobliging nature of beds; so that, pondering these things, it was not long ere I made up my mind to pack my traps, and start in quest of food and shelter.

Over those detestable hills I wandered for at least an hour without seeing either a human creature or a human habitation, and I began to think that my bed, for that night at least, would have to be spread in the open. However, I did the best I could, got on to the lee-side of the rock, and though the wind did creep round now and then, and pierce my scanty little coat, it was better than nothing; and though my couch of heather was damp, it was at least soft. I bethought me of my fish, and wondered whether I could broil them into a respectable meal. I did my best to light some wet bracken with my Vesuvians, for this purpose, but of course it didn't answer. The Swiss family Robinson would have struck two flints together, and there would have been a blazing fire in a crack, I daresay with bread and salt, and other accessories ready to hand. But then I was not the Swiss family Robinson.

All at once, I suddenly thought I heard a human voice, and my heart beat quick to think that the land was actually inhabited after all. I listened intently. It was a kind of a grunt; but, yes, it certainly seemed to emanate from human lungs; then there was a faint sound, as of many footsteps. I shouted: there was a reply; and in a few minutes I made out against the sky, on the brow of the hill, the figure of a woman and some cows. It didn't take me long to reach them. She was driving her cows in for the night, she said. (It is the custom in Brittany to drive in the beasts at night, for fear of the wolves.) Where was she driving them to? Driving them home. Well, if the home was only the cow-shed, it would be better than nothing. I inquired: 'Was there an inn anywhere about?' But this was a question quite beyond the reach of her mental capacity. Probably such a thing as an inn was not to be found at all in these parts; possibly my knowledge of the language— But no; this is a supposition which must not be entertained. I would accompany her and her cows. She seemed rather surprised, and looked at me wonderingly; but I suppose I looked respectable, for she only shouted at her kine, gathered up her tethers, by which they fasten their cattle in the day, and hold them together like a four-in-hand, as they drive them home in the evening, and passed on without further comment, till a distant glimmering light appeared among the trees. 'Yonder was the home.' Oh, yonder was the home, was it? Well, it didn't look spacious; but I hoped for the best.

If a North American Indian, with his feathers nodding on his warlike head, were to ring the

door-bell of a house in Belgrave Square, and, in his North American Indian-English, were to inquire of John Thomas whether he could there have lodging for the night, we imagine that the powdered functionary would betray symptoms at least of surprise. It was scarcely my province, therefore, to wonder at the stare of astonishment with which the uncouth family of the Breton farmer greeted the appearance at their door of a barbarously clothed foreigner, chattering bad Breton to them, and craving their hospitality. I say barbarously clothed, because, however common an object in England, the eyes of the Breton peasantry are little accustomed to the spectacle of a suit of grey dittos, and are strangers to the boots of Hoby. At all events, with a stare of astonishment my appearance was greeted as I stood at the threshold of the somewhat primitive dwelling—astonishment which was in no way mitigated by my earnest appeal for a night's lodging. 'Could they take me in, did they think?' 'Well, they thought not, but might try.' Just then, I fumbled about my purse between my fingers, and hinted that I should be quite ready to pay for it. This seemed to create a motion in favour of my reception from the old woman of the party; and after a short conversation amongst themselves, it was at length determined that a lodging should be found for me, and I was duly installed a member of the family *pro tem*. A somewhat primitive dwelling, I think I said. Well, yes, it was rather. I had time to look about me now, and take a survey of the apartment. It was small, and nearly the whole of one side was taken up by a huge deep fireplace, in which sat father and son, leaning over the fire, and smoking their pipes, in the chimney as it were, occupying very much the position that you and I would, were we to sit facing each other on either hob of a kitchen-range, only that they were on the ground-floor, so to speak. They were fine stalwart-looking fellows both of them, especially the son, and looked very wild and savage in the firelight, with their long unkempt hair hanging about their shoulders; dressed both of them in the usual peasant dress of Brittany—a great broad-brimmed black wideawake, blue jacket, and high-blue waistcoat, tricked out here and there with a little embroidery; their legs in huge knickerbockers that might have been, but were not, white; rough leather gaiters, and monster sabots stuffed with straw. As to their necks, what shall I say? We formerly wore outrageously high collars in England, but these gentlemen outfashioned fashion in that respect. They shot up so straight and high, those white collars of theirs, from their waistcoat, that one almost wondered how they turned their heads at all. I have heard it said that of men there are some who have mind without muscle, and some that have muscle without mind; that there are also those endowed with both qualities; but that there are others who, having neither mind nor muscle, have collars. Verily, Dame Fortune has not forgotten the peasant of Brittany in the latter respect, at all events.

I found that I made the sixth of the party, for besides the two men were an old woman—I should say somebody's grandmother, probably; a young girl, the daughter of the elder gentleman in the chimney; and one, Anna, a dirty-looking person of about five-and-forty summers, whom I found to be the aunt of the young people—sister-in-law,

in fact, of the man I have just mentioned. The old lady was not occupied with anything beyond rocking her chair, and shooting admiring glances at my scarf-pin and watch-chain. Anna was engaged in mending some garment or another of necessary but hidden use, a useful pursuit, which was not unfrequently interrupted by an odd trick she had of rubbing her fingers violently, as though they were cold; whilst the youngest of the party, she who had driven in the cows, was busily occupied in attending to the cooking of some mess, the principal ingredients of which, judging from the fumes which emanated from the pot, I should imagine were garlic and onions. The room was half full of smoke, and everybody and everything in it looked dirty, with the exception of the white and well-starched cap of the young cook. However, I made myself as comfortable and happy as I could; talked Breton in bad grammar and villainous accent to the chimney-tenants; vainly endeavoured to translate a syllable of their muttered and rather sulky replies; felt I was roughing it, and chuckled as I thought of John. I hadn't to wait very long before we were all summoned to the board, to partake of, I think without exception, the nastiest mess that has ever passed my lips. Garlic to me is an abomination; its savoury odour is nauseous to me, its taste quite revolting; and yet these good people seemed quite unable to partake of a single thing without it. A capital, but tiny leg of mutton, excellently cooked, was spoiled by it, and the fish which I presented to them rendered quite uneatable by its presence; so that, had it not been for some good fresh butter, a small tower of which aspired a certain way towards the ceiling, and some tolerable bread, I had run the chance of having no food for that night at least. The meal over, I found there was a discussion as to where and how I should be bedded for the night; and I could make out, partly by my small knowledge of the language, and partly by the indignant expression on the face of poor Anna, that it had been carried unanimously that I was to be lodged at her expense, that she was to abdicate her couch in my favour; and ere long, the lady having been brought to see the necessity of such an arrangement, mine host proceeded to conduct me to my apartment. I hadn't very far to go; a short passage led us to a room on the ground-floor, similar in size to the one we had just vacated; and in a kind of cupboard in the wall, I was pointed out a dirty-looking bundle of blankets and mattress, wherein and whereon, I was informed, I might pass the night. Well, beggars must not be choosers, you know, but I confess I did feel a slight shudder as I gazed at my uninviting couch.

Hunting-men say: 'The more you look the less you like it;' I recollect having said so myself once to a less fortunate friend on the wrong side of a fence, over which my horse had safely carried me against my will; and the present I felt to be an occasion in which my philosophy might well be self-applied. So I looked another way instead, and took a general survey of the apartment, as a cat will do before he settles down. Picture my amazement at discovering that besides my own, there were no less than three other beds in the room, an awful discovery for one who is always so nice and particular about a room to himself. There they were, however, three couches let into the wall similarly to mine, and all three bearing the same dirty appearance. Unless there were other men

attached to the establishment, I was at a loss to conceive for whom they could be intended; and then it flashed across me, that as I knew myself to be occupying Anna's bed, this could scarcely be the arrangement. No; after all, I was, at all events, to enjoy (!) the room to myself, and with this reflection I laid myself down, and prepared for sleep. Now, if you really wish to sleep, it often happens that a steady course of preparation will defeat your object; having turned myself round three times, and having as many times persuaded myself I was dropping into a doze, I was suddenly startled to hear the door of my apartment gently opened. Instant thoughts of robbery, immediate preparations for self-defence ensued, and I bounded from my bed almost into the very arms of the old lady of the house. So I meekly crept back again, to wonder what the prudes of civilised life would say to father, son, and daughter, sister-in-law and mother, all packing for the night in the same apartment; to wonder, also, what my friends would say to my making one of the party. How the operation of disrobing was conducted, I don't know; it took a marvellously short time, if it was done at all. Whether disrobed or not, they were all in bed in a very short time; and for a good hour I lay gazing at the dying embers of the fire—there was a fire lighted even in here—and listening to the even breathing and deep snoring of my five chamber-companions.

Well, I was just beginning to drop off myself in reality—no fancy this time—when I thought I heard a slight whisper from Anna. Being at best but a light sleeper, the sound at once awoke me. It was repeated. 'Jules, Jules' [that was the son], 'I think he sleeps now.'

Think he sleeps now, indeed? What did it matter to her, I should like to know, whether I were asleep or not? Tender solicitude, but on what account?

'Are you sure?' was the whispered reply.

'Yes; I think it's quite safe.'

Holloa! this was more than I liked. I don't know that I am very nervous, usually, but what did this mean? This was a very wild spot. I was utterly alone amongst them. John had said I might be robbed, how foolish of me not to listen to him. Now I came to think of it, I didn't half like the looks of that Jules: a nasty look about him, and an unpromising sulky manner. Jules was six feet at least, and a fine strongly-built fellow; in my highest heels, I had never yet quite craned up to five feet six inches. Nevertheless, if there should be anything in this, I wouldn't be quite quiescent either. Bah! what an ass had I been to shew my purse, as I had done.

'Be careful, Jules: talk low; you will wake him,' hissed the old lady. Ah! the old hag had been eyeing my jewellery, I recollected, all the evening.

'Make sure he sleeps,' growled the old man.

The whole hive was about me. Just then, I distinctly heard a foot rest on the ground from one of the neighbouring couches. I listened. Somebody was creeping towards me. With a desire to postpone my fate, whatever it might be, I turned in my couch to convince them 'it was not safe.' There was an immediate and precipitate retreat of the aggressor to the couch; and then all was quiet again, save for the deep snoring, which I now knew to be false, of the old man and his son.

For a whole hour more, at least, this continued,

during which I lay in an agony of nervousness (I won't say fright, because it sounds so bad), cowering in my bed, and expecting every minute to feel Jules's strong hand at my throat, or his knife at my breast. I thought of the awful stories I had read; my imagination worked on them, and conjured up situations infinitely more ghastly, in which I should play a principal part. I pictured myself held down by the old man, while his son should perpetrate on me some fearful act of brutality. I went further, and saw them burying me darkly beneath the stone floor, and thought of the search for me growing more and more hopeless; of my friends becoming more and more reconciled to my loss; whilst my body should be rotting in the cold soil beneath this detestable house. Come what may, I resolved that nothing should make me sleep that night. So I lay perfectly quiet, listening to the ticking of my watch beneath my pillow, and consoling myself with the melancholy idea that each tick brought me nearer to the morning and the light of day. And then I thought of John, and as I thought of him, I own that this time the consciousness that I was roughing it did fail to convey its meed of consolation. Poor John, he would be waiting for me to-morrow, and where should I be? I wondered if I could leave about me some token, some writing which might be found on me. I was afraid, however, that it might be hard to write beneath the bed-clothes, even had I the means. I pictured to myself some happy discoverer, years hence, alighting with triumph on my whitened bones; I saw them carefully preserved, and taken for investigation to his archæological society. I drew for myself a fancy sketch of the eager and delighted faces of the learned members of the society as they examined the few buttons which should be the sole remnants of my clothing, the ingenious suggestions that should be hazarded thereon, and the learned paper which my discoverer would read to his crowded audience in Paris. I had just arrived at this interesting point of my future history, when I again thought I heard a whisper. Yes, they were quite sure I was asleep now, all of them. I lay as still as a mouse, and awaited the result. There was a rustle by my bed as of a female garment; a light was passed before my eyes backward and forward. Was Anna about to recapture her bed by force of arms? 'Quite asleep,' she whispered. I trembled all over with excitement. I gathered myself quietly together, ready for a wild spring when the exact moment should come. I would at least die game; I would fight and struggle, however great the odds. So that I might be well on my guard, as the candle was gone, I quietly opened my eyes to take a survey of the enemy's manoeuvres. What a scene! The whole family were gathered round the last embers of the fire, apparently engaged in the somewhat mysterious and indecorous proceeding of stripping themselves to the waist. Anna feels for a jar on the shelf over the fire. There is a powerful and unpleasant smell of sulphur in the room: they are all engaged in rubbing themselves and each other. The sulphuric smell grows intense. Am I to be stifled? Will they rush suddenly from the apartment, and leave me to suffocate? Anna is rubbing herself more furiously than all the others: she applies sulphur between her fingers. Eugh! Horror! horror! I see it all now. The rubbing becomes infectious. I rub too, madly, furiously. Rub!—no, tear and scratch myself.



Alas for the fate which led me to this awful abode! Alas for the infatuation that allowed me to rest in Anna's vacated bed!

I left the house next morning, feeling like a very leper. There was a dog sitting on the door-step. As I came up, he wriggled himself into an ungainly attitude, and commenced scratching. I had not noticed it before: he had the mange.

'There is nothing for it but sulphur, my dear fellow,' said John, as he moved his camp-stool a yard from me.

'Time, my dear sir—it will take time,' said my doctor. And it did take time. But time will be immeasurable before I again seek the hospitality of Jules and his family—before I again lodge at Anna's expense.

### SCHOOLMASTERS.

'O that my schoolmaster would write a book!' must have been the wish of many a juvenile newspaper critic, not so long emancipated from school thralldom but that the memory of it is still keen. How great the Tyrant seems while we are under his control, and how small when we look at him from the other side of the gulf of Adolescence; much as Theodore King of Abyssinia must now appear to the captives who have escaped his barbarous chains. It is a bold proceeding in a pedagogue to come before grown-up folks as the author of a work upon his own genus—*A Book about Dominies*.\* Perhaps he gives credence to the popular opinion that reviewers have had no education at all, and have therefore no private scholastic wrongs to avenge; whereas he will find himself, we fear, mistaken; they have all been to school indeed, but most of them to schools at which 'manners' was an extra. Manners was rather an extra, it seems, at our author's own educational establishment; since, though he likes boys as much as a man can like the thing he is obliged to get his living by, he hates 'young gentlemen.'

'Yes, it is a sad fact, that about the age of fourteen, sooner or later, many of my boys undergo a fatal transformation. The external symptoms are unmistakable, and the disease, when once it has got a firm hold, is almost incurable. First, they begin to neglect their boyish sports, and to lounge about the playground, talking nonsense, or worse. No hockey nor "tig," *alias* "dab," for our young gentlemen, to crush their collars or dirty their boots. They often, however, shew great zeal for cricket, fencing, or any other kind of amusement which gives them an excuse for investing themselves in gorgeous flannel raiment. But more likely they devote themselves to playing on the piano. Then they take to walking about the streets, got up in what they fondly conceive to be the first style of the fashion. They wear gloves and carry canes. When I was at school, any boy who appeared with a ring on his finger would have been teased out of his mind, and we know that even the great Mr Toots only ventured to put his on in the holidays; but all the young gentlemen of the present day are unblushingly thus adorned. I

saw a boy of fourteen to-day who wore an enormous battered old ring which had apparently belonged to his grandmother. I noticed this with inward laughter while I was engaged in ornamenting his hand in another manner, through the same agency as Jacob employed for the same purpose upon Laban's cattle. Then while, *consule Planco*, as Horace and the author of *Tom Brown* would say, we used to have a pair of corduroys for school-wear, and a pair of cloth trousers for Sundays, our modern young gentlemen go to a wild excess in the matter of peg-tops, some of them possessing as many as four pair. It will be well for their afflicted friends and relatives if they do not adorn themselves in enormous paper-collars, with broad coloured stripes. They begin to look with an envious eye upon their papa's jewellery, and regard a gold watch-chain as the *summum bonum* of life. They manifest great eagerness to go out to dancing-parties, and profess to like the society of young ladies, before whom, however, they are generally dumb. They make up for this silence, though, by talking about them behind their backs in a way that is very ridiculous, and certainly not edifying. They make furtive attempts to smoke cigars, whence arise unutterable woes. They take wine now when it is offered to them, and try hard to like it. They turn up their noses at bread and butter and early dinners. They are made miserable by thinking that their jackets are too short, or by not being allowed to have stand-up collars. . . . This is the terrible disease which corrupts the healthy happiness of boyhood.'

Our author, being a dominie, believes in the 'healthy happiness' of boyhood. There is surely a touch of the scholastic advertisement about that phrase: it reminds one of 'the good and wholesome fare; the airy dormitories; the expanse of wood and verdure,' which is otherwise called the playground; and the treatment as 'one of the family.' And, indeed, although our author is, in most respects, a most sensible and honest fellow, 'the shop' does now and then peep out in his pleasant little volume with laughable distinctness. He is much aggrieved by the inferior social position in which Society, forsooth, with her airs and graces, has chosen to place pedagogues—that is, pedagogues who are not also parsons. He considers himself as good as any man that wears a white neckcloth, and (between ourselves) rather better. He has a cordial contempt (and perhaps some jealousy) for the men who rule our great public schools, certainly without adequate result, considering the extent of their salaries; for 'the Olympian Jupiters who move in awful state through time-honoured oaken chambers and gray cloisters . . . for ever kings of boys, and mighty men upon earth, till the day when their pride and their power shall suddenly have an end, when for sins of their youth, not yet duly expiated, they shall be seized upon by the *locum tenens* for the time being of our head of the church, and, in spite of pitiful cries of *nolo episcopari, nolo, nolo*, shall be remorselessly translated to a certain place in the House of Lords, reserved as a St Helena for the despots of youth, thenceforth to live and die unpitied, unfear'd, unknown.' We are inclined to suspect that our author does not happen to have been at college, or to have passed through any of those examinations which add more or less capital letters to a man's name, the use of which is found when one advertises for boarders; otherwise the following sensible remarks

\* *A Book about Dominies: being the Reflections and Recollections of a Member of the Profession.* Nimmo, Edinburgh.

would scarcely be stated so forcibly. 'I can quite understand that any one ought to be examined as to his knowledge of anatomy before he be allowed to tamper with the human body, but I do not believe that any examination, oral or written, can shew whether he be fit or unfit to deal with the minds of boys. You may examine a man as to his knowledge of the force of *kata* in composition, but you cannot by examining him find out whether he is firm and kind and vigilant and persevering, and still less whether he has the power of imparting his knowledge of *kata* and other subjects to unwilling and unretentive little minds that don't want to know anything about *kata*.'

The chapter entitled 'My Parents' gives a curious account of how our pedagogue was worried, and his usefulness impeded, by the interference of his pupils' papas and (especially) mammas; but this incidentally discloses that he could not have presided over a very select establishment. Not only no master of a public school, but no master of a private one beyond the rank of 'a genteel academy,' would submit to such impertinent meddling as he describes—that is, in England; but it is fair to state that our dominie's establishment is on the other side of Tweed, where custom in this respect may be different. 'My Parents' not only interfere, it seems, but they are downright rude. 'Too many highly respectable matrons in this part of the country look upon the family dominie in scarcely a higher light than the family grocer. . . . Occasionally, they have to send us notes, excusing the absence of their sons, or to some such effect. These notes are not unfrequently such as they would not send to any other professional men. They are sometimes written on half-sheets or other odd slips of paper. I think some ladies keep all the blank pages of their letters—if ladies' letters ever have blank pages—to write washing-bills and notes to dominies on. They don't always use the ordinary forms of address in our case, and very often don't even take the trouble to sign their communications. They write "Mr" So-and-so on the outside, not "Esq.," and thereby cause many weak-minded brethren of the craft to be offended. I have seen a dominie publicly tear up a note brought by one of his boys which did not give him his full style and title, but all men are not so courageous—nor so touchy. I intend to take a more dignified revenge on the authors of these notes. They are afraid of Mrs Grundy, and would not write such notes if they thought she would see them. But I warn all whom it may concern, that in the tenth edition of this work I intend to print, for the information of that Argus-eyed divinity, a few of the communications which I daily receive from my parents, unless they turn over a new leaf and write in a more polite style. And the name of the lady who sent me a note upon a piece of her husband's shaving-paper shall be printed at the head of the list in large capitals.'

It is certainly an infamous shame to treat so humorous and agreeable a man as our author—a true gentleman, too, as we should think, to boot—in so cavalier a manner; and it is very good of him not to 'take it out' of the boys of such mammas. That there are many such, we do not doubt. There is ample corroboration of the fact in the government Reports of the Schools' Inquiry Commission—in that by Mr Hammond, for

instance;\* but the commissioner is writing of second, or rather third class schools.

'Two days in the week, for my sins,' confesses our Pedagogue with shame, 'my class-room is open to the visits of maternal parents. . . . each indignantly clamorous to know why her darling is not at the head of the class.' This seems to us to be a custom quite intolerable, and one which could not prevail in anything like a high-class academy. The experience of our pedagogue may therefore be taken as confined to boys of a considerably inferior rank to those who are sent to public schools; and we may also conclude from other evidence that at least a portion of his pupils are but day-scholars. These two facts will go some way to account for so sagacious a gentleman having fallen into the error that the juveniles whom he makes his study are 'not wicked, but rather the reverse,' and that they are, on the whole, far better than men. This is monstrously untrue. It is only among boys—with some few terrible grown-up exceptions—that cruelty is ever practised for its own sake; but then it is most common at our more aristocratic establishments (just as the more refined vices belong to the higher ranks), and cannot be much practised among day-boys, who go home in those hours of leisure which the boy-bully would otherwise devote to his favourite pastime. We hold this to be one reason why our author has little to say about this matter; and perhaps another is, that all pedagogues are aware that it is to their shame that generation after generation of boys continue to be cruel.

In lame apology for this acknowledged fact, our author prints this remarkable sentence: 'It must be remembered that boys are to a certain extent fond of pain, both to give and to suffer it. I am convinced that what is often called cruelty in a boy is a mere love of pain for its own sake, not for the purpose of making miserable the victim, who, for his part, is generally not altogether an unwilling sufferer. I remember that, when an urchin, newly flogged at a public school, I looked rather with respect and esteem than otherwise upon a big boy—how very big he seemed then!—who recreated himself nightly by thrashing me and my fellows, varying the amusement by putting us to stand in a corner with our faces to the wall to meditate upon a pleasant promise that if we turned round he would throw a slate at us. And yet this monitor was a good-hearted enough fellow, who never meant to make us miserable, and would doubtless have stopped his tortures at once if he saw them producing that effect.' This is a ludicrous mis-statement, but one which our author should be ashamed to print even by way of a joke. The evils of the brutality he describes are to the monitor often incalculable—the least he can expect from them is to grow up a prig; while to 'the admonished,' it is well if, for the rest of their lives, authority is not confounded with brute-power, or the sense of justice utterly extinguished. Of course, it is very silly to make boys effeminate, or to prevent them using their fists where the combatants are tolerably well matched, and the cause of battle sufficient; but to make excuse for the bully, or, what is as bad, to applaud the victim for his patient submission to wrong, is, in our opinion, something worse than mean. It would be more honest in our pedagogue to confess at once that to stop cruelty among boys

\* Norfolk and Northumberland Report.

would be to take a great deal of trouble; as we daresay it would. Yet how much more fitly might his favourite prescription—

*Lignum,cane . . . . . 3 ft.  
To be applied externally. The dose to be repeated if  
necessary—*

be given to bullies than to mere breakers of 'bounds,' or windows, or even secret inhalers of the noxious weed. The fact is, these gentry who are so contemptuous (and justly so) of 'molly-coddling' and effeminacy, are just as one-sided and narrow in their views as the people they despise. As the latter conceive the Boy to be gentle-natured and intelligent, with a taste for natural scenery and sugared bread and butter, so the former picture him as all thews and sinews, with no passions or principles except a love of truth (not justice) and a Spartan endurance. We entirely agree with our author on the absurdity of doing away with all corporal punishment among boys, but we are by no means in favour of applying it indiscriminately to all of them, like the brimstone and treacle at Dotheboys Hall. The very suggestion of such a general remedy bespeaks the lack of particular cure. Does a good gardener use the watering-pot to every flower alike, or the good parish priest apply the same text to every sinner? So a discriminating application of the cane shews the good preceptor. Now, it seems our author has but one type of the *genus* Boy: a hardy lad, but who nevertheless 'rubs the palms of his hands with resin, and looks forward with delightful dread to that first caning which is to seal his undisputed title to the name of school-boy.' A description, which, to say the least of it, is very partial, and smells uncommonly of the shop.

However, we must not be out of humour with our author, for he can take broad views enough when he pleases, and state them with force and humour. Much of what he has to say even of corporal punishment is well worth hearing. It is not only indispensable in some cases, but those schoolmasters who plume themselves (you may see their advertisements any morning in the *Times*) upon never using it are to be regarded with suspicion. He is again curiously corroborated in this by the government Report. 'On this subject,' says Mr Hammond, 'it is difficult to obtain satisfactory information either from masters or boys; but I am inclined to mistrust the statements of masters who are very loud in disclaiming all use of the cane. One, for instance, who made an undignified appeal to his scholars to substantiate his assertions, was nevertheless reported to beat his boys unmercifully about the head and ears.' Again: 'In answer to my questions on the subject of corporal punishment, I was constantly assured that it was inflicted only "in cases of gross misconduct." The phrase is a very elastic one, and the meaning attached to it is tolerably loose. At one school, of which this expression is used in the written replies of the master, the boys of a particular form were asked, in my presence, whether any of them had been caned, and if so, for what offences. To the evident surprise of the master, the whole form, consisting of thirty or forty boys, had been caned, and on my asking one at random what was his last offence and punishment, he told me, "twelve on the hand for whistling."'

Our present author makes no bones about this matter at all. He is as great an advocate of

corporal punishment as Midshipman Easy's schoolmaster himself; and he even devotes a chapter to the special description and laudation of his instrument of correction, which he playfully terms 'Lion.' Lion is a strap of stout leather divided at one end into strips, and called in the North a taws. The pupils of our pedagogue take, according to his own account, quite a pride in this instrument; 'boast to their companions of his prowess as compared with the Lions of other dominies, and proudly relate their encounters with and escapes from him. . . . Often, dipping their hands in a tan-pool, or anointing them with mystic drugs, they invoke the goddess Diana, and strive to emulate the fortitude of the Spartan boys. . . . New-fashioned dominies may despise Lion, but I believe in him. I consider him to be a sound and simple system of theology, adapted to the comprehension of the boyish mind. I can't argue logically in the defence of my opinion. I know that the spirit of the age is said to be against me, and that spirit is hard to strive against. But there are some matters on which I hold the instinct of the child-world to be better than the logical theories of this hobbledehoy age, and that instinct seems to me to place a truer value on the merits of Lion, *et hoc genus omne*. So I hope that he will long continue to exercise a strictly limited and constitutional monarchy in our English schools. Nay, more; if I had my way, I would sharpen his claws, and send him forth to devour among bad men as well as naughty boys. I would flog and spare not garrotters, pickpockets, fraudulent bankrupts, dishonest railway directors, adulterating grocers, and all other ruffians and swindlers. This is strong language to apply to respectable people, but mixing so much with boys, I have got into their bad habit of calling things by their right names.'

More than one chapter of our dominie's book is devoted to the classification of boys, but there is a suspicious sameness in their well-being under his system, and in their liking for Lion. Indeed, it almost seems that our author claims approbation for himself and his method of treatment, independent of their genuine merit altogether. 'I remember when I was a boy that one of my own masters was, like too many other dominies, harsh, capricious, unrelenting. He made no allowances; he punished without discrimination—as often unjustly as justly. Well, we did not exactly love this man; but we revered him. We took all his harshness and cruelty as a matter of course, and fed with thankfulness upon the rare crumbs of human kindness which from time to time he flung us. We believed in him then, and such is the force of custom that some of us believe in him to this day. Since we grew up, I have heard my old schoolfellows talking of this man, and pronouncing him a most excellent man, and a most judicious master. I know better; but then I have been all through the temple; I have myself been hidden in the statue and delivered the oracles.' Our author is very much mistaken if he thinks it requires another pedagogue to find out a bad pedagogue; and we have met with one or two ourselves, with respect to whom, notwithstanding that we have never kept a school, we have never had a doubt that they ought to be whipped at the cart's tail. Lion would be altogether inadequate to their demerits. The fact is, our dominie's position prevents him from observing matters from the boys'



point of view at all, although, from his own standpoint, he sees with great clearness.

Nothing can be better, for instance, than the account he gives of his pupils' characteristics, and the fallacious prophecies that are, on the strength of them, indulged in as to their manhood. Tom, who, as a boy, was always so pompous, one may perhaps safely predict will be the alderman and great local politician he has become; and Harry, who used to fight with his school-friends of all sizes, may be pointed out with tolerable certainty as the future wearer of a Victoria Cross; but for the most part, the Boy is far from being Father to the man. Parents, masters, and schoolfellows turn out to be equally false prophets with respect to him. 'Brown, who gets so many school-prizes, runs away from home, enlists in the Marines, and is eaten by a shark off the Barbadoes; while that stupid fellow Jones, who sat hopelessly at the bottom, and shewed capacity for nothing but poking pins into other boys' legs, has developed that solitary talent to such a purpose, that he is now a well-known surgeon and anatomist, making his thousands a year.' Well may he quote Præd's lines upon this matter, for they contain an undeniable truth as was ever spoken in jest.

Tom Mill was used to blacken eyes  
Without the fear of sessions;  
Charles Medlar loathed false quantities,  
As much as false professions.  
Now Mill keeps order in the land,  
A magistrate pedantic,  
And Medlar's feet repose unscanned  
Beneath the wide Atlantic.

Wild Nick, whose caths made such a din,  
Does Dr Martext's duty;  
And Mullion, with that monstrous chin,  
Is married to a beauty.  
And Darrell studies, week by week  
His Mant, and not his Mantion;  
And Ball, who was but poor at Greek,  
Is very rich at Canton.

The simple reason for these apparent contradictions is to be found in the fact, which our dominie would be slow to allow, that schools, as at present conducted, fail altogether to educe the real characteristics of boys. All are treated alike and in the lump, to save cost in the matter of particular treatment. The prompt rejoinder, of course, is, that boys are so treated in the world, for which school is a preparation; but this is false. Good-manners, fine taste, generous impulses, delicate susceptibilities, and their contraries, insure men very different receptions in the world; whereas school, like the Scavenger's Daughter in the Tower, cramps every frame alike, and makes no allowance.

The dominie has a keen eye for this great fault of insufficient supervision at our public schools; he perceives the absurdity of one man being able to teach fifty boys at once, not to speak of his getting any knowledge of their individual characters; and he even describes, for our learning, the sort of school to which he would send his own son if he had one, and such a school were in existence. 'I would have this school as large as possible, but I would have it divided into small classes or forms. This arrangement would require a large number of masters to carry it out, and I would appoint these masters not only because they were good scholars, but good

men. As far as possible, I should try to secure that they should not be clergymen who cannot get livings, and have merely taken to teaching as a temporary expedient on the road to a bishopric or other dignity; but men who have devoted their whole life to the work of teaching, and have their heart and soul in it. I would not have the boys living together in large mobs, but would have them either residing with their parents, or boarded in small numbers with the masters, or other persons competent to take care of them. Thus the advantages of home-training and supervision out of school-hours would be added to the healthy influence of mixing in a large society of boys. The essence of my system of discipline would be a judicious control, which should not be inconsistent with a due measure of freedom, nor prevent a boy's nature from healthily developing itself. I would make as few laws as possible, but would take care that they be rigorously observed. I would try to teach the boys to take a pride in my system of discipline, remembering that the tone of feeling among themselves will always be more powerful than the anathemas of any dominie. I would on no account allow their parents to interfere with my regulations. If a boy obeyed me, well and good; if he did not, he should be punished; if that had no effect on him, he should leave the school. I would expel confirmed bullies, and liars, and foul-mouthed scoundrels, with all possible marks of ignominy and loathing. I would have none but honest school-boys, no 'young gentlemen.' For these unhappy members of humanity, I would provide a separate establishment on some desolate island, to which they might be banished till old enough to go to college.'

#### PRACTICAL JOKES.

ALTHOUGH we are all grown so practical, and study how to become more practical with daily increasing success, yet practical joking is at a discount. Practical jokes are voted vulgar, witless, stupid, ill-natured; and it is really impossible to deny that the popular verdict is a correct one; but how amusing they often are! And after all, is not that the great thing? Man, look you, is the only animal (the hyena excepted) that can laugh, and is not this laughter at least as valuable a boon as either of his other characteristics? A fine use he often makes of his reason! The gift of speech is an edged tool which frequently cuts himself, and is always doing mischief; but who ever failed to receive benefit, both bodily and mentally, from a hearty laugh? It assists the digestion, clears the brain, and softens the heart.

Now, I think I receive as much pleasure as any one from a witty repartee or a humorous description; but—did you ever see any one trying to get into an apple-pie bed? Did they call 'absence' at your school on holidays, to prevent the boys from straying too far? They did at ours; and on fine summer days, when the master read the names over in the playing-fields, it was a common trick for one of us to creep on his hands and knees behind a boy whose turn was coming, while another gave him a slight push on the chest at the critical moment. To see a lad hold up his



hat, and shout 'Here, sir!' and simultaneously take a back-somersault, was really very comical.

You must, in your youth, have either set or fallen into a 'booby-trap.' It consisted, you may remember, of books, boots, &c. balanced on the top of a door, which was left ajar, so that the first incomer got a solid shower-bath.

Another trick was to pour water into a stone ink-bottle, cork it tightly, and slip it between the bars of a boy's grate on a winter's evening, when he was returning to his room after a temporary absence—the nozzle of course directed towards his chair. The tenant returned, and sat down to his verses or translation; presently the water began to boil, and the steam fired off the cork at him.

The fun of a practical joke consists in the surprise of the victim, and this was certainly attained by gently turning up a cupboard-bed with its inmate. The astonishment of a sound sleeper on finding himself standing on his head in a cupboard, is very great indeed; but it is a mercy that no boy was ever stifled.

Children, indeed, are probably as much given to practical joking now as ever they were; it is to be hoped so, for only in exceptional cases do boys understand any other kind of jest; and a human being without fun is in a morbid, unhealthy condition.

The same remarks apply to those classes of the community who have received least intellectual education. It is shallow to cry out against their horse-play; horse-play is ten thousand thousand times better than no play at all. The newspapers are always very harsh when treating of the little eccentricities of army-men; and whether this pressure of public opinion has cowed them, or competitive examinations have sobered them, or an undue proportion of Indian service has made them languid, or Aldershott has bored them into listlessness, it is the fact that even in crack cavalry regiments there is very little practical joking now.

Certainly they used to carry the thing too far; there seems to an outsider but little humour in cutting off the tail of a man's charger, or smashing his barrack furniture.

An acquaintance of mine with a somewhat saturnine disposition, who entered the army late, met the ordeal to which newly joined ensigns in his regiment were customarily put in a very dangerous manner. Having been warned that his barrack-room would probably be invaded in the middle of the night, and all his clothes and chattels subjected to a hay-making process, he barricaded his door, and when his brother-officers began to burst it in, he sent a pistol-bullet through the panel about half a foot over their heads. They let him alone after that.

Perhaps the decline of practical joking both in the army and amongst civilians is due in a great measure to the abolition of duelling. It seems mean to play tricks upon a man who has no redress in case he should take serious offence; and this undoubtedly is the weak part of the practice, that it necessitates a victim. This is the case, indeed, with

the majority of our amusements: one cannot win a game without another losing it; fox-hunting is unpleasant for the fox; and shooting entails pain and death upon the objects of our sport; neither does anybody, however good a face he may put upon the matter, like to be made game of. But in the last instance there is an element of treachery which distinguishes it from the others; to insure the success of a practical joke, it is generally necessary to lull the victim into a false security.

Altogether, then, I am afraid we must let practical joking, at least among educated adults, go to limbo; but surely there can be no harm in liking to hear about it. I hope not; for to hear or read of a good trick amuses me vastly. Who can read the life of that emperor of practical joking, Theodore Hook, without enjoyment? Who would not have liked to be in the secret of the great Berners Street Hoax, or — But I must steer clear of anecdotes which the reader has by heart. This one is not so generally known.

In the year 1778, a nephew of the Emperor of Morocco visited Paris as his uncle's ambassador. He was received with great pomp at the court, and all the nobility vied with one another in giving him fêtes. Certain young men thought this afforded them a good opportunity for playing a trick upon a very pretentious man named Septenville, a rich horse-dealer. They began by persuading him that he ought to invite the Moorish prince to a fête at his country-house, which was one of the most beautiful in the environs of Paris; they assured him that they had sufficient influence to persuade His Excellency to accept the invitation and honour the affair with his presence. They pointed out to him that the money it cost would be well spent in the end; that a connection of this description would give great notoriety to his business, and enable him to extend it considerably, and that very likely His Excellency would, out of gratitude, send him some Barbs. Septenville calculated all these advantages, and decided without much struggle to receive the ambassador with all the expense and show proper on the occasion. Some days afterwards, he was informed that His Excellency consented to do him the honour of passing a day at his place, to which he would come on such a day at such an hour. The merchant immediately began doing all he could think of to render his house worthy of receiving such a guest: he ordered fireworks of Torre, the great man of the age in that line; he had his grounds and the front of his house brilliantly illuminated; he engaged the most celebrated musicians at a great expense; he sent out invitations to all the nobility and people of fashion whose names and addresses he could get hold of, to the court, to the most distinguished foreigners, to all the handsomest actresses. Of course, the arrangements for the banquet were on a scale corresponding with all the other preparations.

On the appointed day, after having allowed himself to be waited for for some time, the ambassador, accompanied by all his court, arrived in a magnificent carriage. He was received with a flattering address, to which he replied by means of an interpreter. He was asked to sing, and consented with the utmost affability. The fête went on capitally, and Septenville was out of his wits with joy. At the banquet, he refused to sit at table with so illustrious a guest, but insisted on standing behind his chair with a napkin under his arm. The ball opened, and the guests enjoyed themselves

thoroughly, without suspecting any trick, till three o'clock in the morning, when a body of soldiers and police appeared in the ball-room. They had come to take the sham ambassador into custody; and Septenville found he had been duped. The man who played the part of the ambassador was the son of a bookseller named Prault. He was precisely of the same age and shape as the Moorish prince, and was so well got up as to deceive everybody.

That was as carefully prepared a hoax as any Hook was ever guilty of, and the French used to be quite as much addicted to practical joking as ourselves; indeed, I fancy that the palm for ingenuity in such matters must be awarded to them, for the plots of some of our best mystifications have come from the same country that supplies us so liberally with the framework of our plays.

The idea of sending innumerable coffins, hearses, wedding-carriages, pictures, beds, tables, &c. at a given day and hour, to an unfortunate individual's house, was originally French.

But, after all, these elaborate jokes are not so humorous as those which are spontaneous, such as the following:

A young French gentleman, who led a very gay life, going to bed late and getting up late, lodged in an *entresol*. A milkwoman took up her position under his window, and the chattering of her customers, with the braying of her donkey, effectually destroyed his slumbers. In vain he remonstrated; the milkwoman said she had a right to the pavement, and that place suited her. He got up, went out, and reasoned with her. No good. What, then, would she take to select another station? Nothing: he was an aristocrat, and she made it a point of honour to stand upon her rights. 'Well, then,' he said at last, 'since you will not listen to reason, I must appeal to your donkey;' and he whispered in Neddy's ear, the crowd which had gathered round laughing at him till he ran in. Presently, however, the donkey began to kick and plunge as if it were possessed, spilling all the milk, butter, cheese, &c. The woman cried out 'Witchcraft;' the crowd took up the cry; and there was such a riot, that the police came.

'What is the matter?' asked the commissary.

'A young man who lives on the *entresol* has bewitched my ass,' replied the milkwoman.

'Pooh, pooh!' said the commissary; but the woman would not be pooh, poohed, and he had to take her up to the gentleman's apartments, and confront him with the complainant.

She told her story at length. The young man waited patiently till she had quite done, and then said: 'Sir, this woman has spoiled my night's rest for this month past. I have complained, I have entreated: she has scorned my requests and my prayers. I could not revenge myself upon a woman; but her donkey, who is masculine, had no such claim upon my forbearance; besides, the peculiar cries of the animal are what is most distressing to me. This ass, as avaricious as his mistress, has a sister upon whose succession he counted, but who is going to marry again; it was this news, whispered by me in his ear, which exasperated him to such a degree that he conducted himself in so violent a manner.'

The commissary, who could hardly keep his countenance, said that the young man had better pay for the milk that was spilt, and advised the milkwoman to move her station beyond the reach of a man who had such a peculiar power of con-

versing with animals. Both assented, and the woman took the money, crossed herself, and went. 'And now then,' said the commissary to the young man, 'how did you do it?'

'I dropped a lighted fusee in the brute's ear,' said he.

A French auditor of accounts in the seventeenth century was a great practical joker all his life, and even played a trick after he had lost the power of enjoying it, for he left four large candles to be carried at his funeral, which had not been burning fifteen minutes before they went off as fireworks.

When a lady condescends to a practical joke, it is generally a very neat one. M. Boncourt, the rich financier, was very stingy to his wife in the matter of pin-money. One day a lady, closely veiled, and very anxious not to be recognised, called upon him and borrowed a large sum, leaving her diamonds as a pledge. It was his wife.

The French thieves sometimes used to steal so funnily that even their victims were half inclined to pardon them.

The Duke of Frousac, nephew of Marshal Richelieu, was coming out of the opera one night in a splendid dress embroidered with pearls, when two thieves managed to cut off his coat-tails. He turned into his club, where everybody laughed at him, and so he found out what had happened, and went home. Early the next morning, a well-dressed man called at the duke's hotel, and demanded to see him at once, on a matter of most vital importance. Monsieur de Frousac was awakened. 'Monseigneur,' said the visitor, 'I am an officer of police. Monsieur the lieutenant of police has learned the accident which happened to you yesterday on leaving the opera, and I have been sent by him to request you to order the coat to be placed in my hands, that we may convict the offenders by comparing it with the mutilated tails.' The dress was given up, and the duke was in raptures with the vigilance of the police. But it was a new trick of the rogue who had stolen the tails, by which he possessed himself of the entire garment.

The ancients used to indulge in practical jokes to a considerable extent; for instance, the Thracians, at their drinking-parties, sometimes played the game of hanging. They fixed a round noose to the bough of a tree, and placed underneath it a stone of such a shape that it would easily turn round when any one stood on it. Then they drew lots; and he who drew the lot, took a sickle in his hand, stood on the stone, and put his neck into the halter. The stone was kicked away; and if he could cut himself down with his sickle, well and good; but if he was not quick enough, he was hanged outright; 'and the rest laugh, thinking it good sport.'

Then there was some old gentleman—I forget his name and nation—who pretended to make friends with his enemy, and asked him to dinner; and for the last course, a large dish was brought in, which proved, when uncovered, to contain the heads of the guest's wife and family. This was carrying a joke almost too far.

Nero's jests were likewise very practical. 'What a fat fellow that senator is!' he observed one day to a courtier; 'see me cut him in two!' and he did it in the most facetious manner.

Indeed, in the early stages of civilisation, practical wit is apt to be grim; as society advances, jokes at other people's expense are not quite so heartless; when we reach a certain pitch of

refinement, nothing gives us pleasure which causes pain to another, and then there is a chance of practical joking dying out altogether—except in the case of boys, who will probably never be humanised.

BLONDEL PARVA.

CHAPTER XXXV.—THE CURATE CONSENTS TO STAY.

'You are all mystery, Maurice,' said the curate peevishly. 'I protest that having you in the house is like receiving the Sphinx upon a visit. You had nothing for me last night but hints and innuendoes, and you have only innuendoes and hints for me this morning. I want to know the solid facts that justify your offensively high spirits.'

'Well, haven't I told you I am going to be married?'

'Yes; but I knew that before; and when I offer to start hot-foot for the manor-house with my congratulations, I am requested to wait a little. Miss Kate will see me at the priory, forsooth, this afternoon! You are not going to picnic there among the snow, I presume?'

'Well, you see, Kate is an heiress now'—

'Thank you for nothing: I had that news, remember, from old Watson, not from you. He had kept it bottled up so long in spite of himself that he absolutely frothed over with it; it was offered to all-comers like ginger-beer, which, if not instantly poured out, is lost. He sat by his ingle dispensing it to all thirsty ears, and his wife snatched up her bonnet, and carried the tidings through the village for gratuitous distribution.'

'Well, being an heiress,' said Maurice smiling, 'this young woman, you see, already begins to behave herself as such; has her little fancies and affectations; desires, for instance, to receive your good wishes in the same spot where you first introduced her to your humble servant. For my own part, I think it's rather pretty of her; it has a certain touch of poetry about it.'

'She will have a certain touch of rheumatism if she doesn't take care,' grumbled the curate.

'Mind, I don't sit down, whatever happens; but I'll be there, you may tell her, at three precisely, and I hope she'll be pretty punctual. So *au revoir*.' And Maurice started for the manor.

'It's selfish of her,' soliloquised the curate, 'to ask me to come to a place she knows cannot be very agreeable to me, which, indeed, is full of painful memories. Riches do, I have heard, blunt the feelings of those who possess them, and certainly the process seems to be a quick one. And yet I won't call her selfish neither; I have known Kate Irby do very unselfish things. It's a little thoughtless of her—that's all.' And the poor curate sighed deeply.

Mr Milton was punctual to the appointed time at the priory gate, which was opened to him, to his great relief, by Maurice himself; neither Grange nor his daughter was visible, nor, indeed, was it usual for them to be at the ruins in that season.

'Kate is in the gate-house by the fire,' said Glyn, 'and wants to speak to you at once, Charley. I shall not be jealous.'

The curate and Miss Irby had not seen much of one another during the late months; the latter's

state of depression making her very indisposed for society of any kind; and Milton himself being less disinclined for it, for the same reason. But each had a very honest respect and regard for the other.

'I congratulate you with all my heart, Miss Kate,' said Milton, holding out both his hands. 'I am delighted that all is settled happily—although, for my part, I never understood the obstacle—between you and Maurice. He has been my friend these many years; and I don't know a more sound-hearted man.'

'Thank you kindly, dear Mr Milton. I know that I am more fortunate than I deserve.'

'I did not say *that*, my dear Miss Kate; but I do not think you could have even a better husband. As for your newly acquired wealth, that is a small matter, with respect to happiness, as compared with the other: although I firmly believe that you will both make a good use of wealth.'

'I hope so, Mr Milton. We have as usual been already pleasing ourselves in the disposal of some of it, although I am sure, in this particular case, it was well laid out.'

And she put a telegram into his hand. *The advowson is yours.*

'What does that mean?' asked the curate simply.

'We have bought back the advowson of Blondel Parva, which my father disposed of; and you are to have the next presentation, Mr Milton. I am sure it gives me almost as much pleasure as Maurice to think that we shall keep you here; for we shall not live at Anstey Court, but at the old place, because my mother loves it so dearly.'

'Miss Kate,' said the curate with emotion, 'this is only like your generous self, and my dear friend Glyn. It is meant, I know, most kindly by you both. But—the fact is, I—I can't stay here. Maurice knows why, and I thought, perhaps—since you were engaged, when men, I have heard, become like women in their inability to keep secrets—that he might have told you the reason.'

'He did tell me, Mr Milton; but not until last night; if he had been less reticent, I might have helped you earlier, perhaps. You must be our vicar, sir.'

'My good Miss Kate, it is impossible.'

'And you must marry Mary Grange.'

'Nay, madam. Forgive me, if I decline to speak upon this matter.' The curate looked very white and proud.

'Nay, forgive me, if I persevere in speaking of it,' returned Kate earnestly. 'Your argument is, that since Mary would not have you when you were a curate, and poor, you do not care to be accepted because you are a vicar and rich. I think you are quite right, so far, Mr Milton. Only such was not the state of the case.'

'I heard it from her own lips,' groaned the curate.

'Yes; because it was dictated to her.'

Milton shook his head.

'Not by her father; that is true; but by Maurice.'

'By Maurice!' exclaimed Milton in astonishment.

'Yes, I am sorry to say, by *him*. The facts of the case are these. He had the warmest affection for his friend, but he underrated that friend's love for another. He was convinced that your marriage with Mary would be the greatest misfortune for you both. He was deeply apprehensive of your



uncle's wrath, and when it declared itself, he strove to save you from it by what he now considers very unwarrantable means. He went to Mary, and laid the matter before her—shewed how your social ruin would result from her engaging herself to you—pleaded, in fact, as though he had been retained as advocate upon your uncle's side. Mary, darling unselfish girl, resolved at once that she should never be the cause of your poverty. She determined to sacrifice her love for you to your supposed worldly interests. She could not bring herself to say: "I do not love you;" and, besides, you would not have believed her. But she compelled herself to do a more hateful thing—a thing utterly abhorrent to her guileless nature: she affected to have a mercenary object. (Fancy our dear Mary mercenary! What geese you men are, to be sure!) "I will never marry a curate," said she: and you believed her.

'I will never forgive Maurice Glyn!' exclaimed Milton passionately.

'What! not forgive Maurice? Oh! but you will, though! Now look you, dear friend; he did it all with the best of intentions. He was not clever, but he meant well. Or, perhaps he was a little over-clever—let us say that was it. It was his very affection for you, mind, that led him to be so absurdly strategic. Not only have I not the slightest sympathy with him in this matter, but I happen to know that if he had been in your case, he would have married Mary at all hazards. He is the least calculating of mortals where he himself is concerned: all impulse, no prudence. But I will say this for him, that he would not have taken that "I will never marry a curate" for real earnest. Maurice is not so easily denied, although so kind.'

'He has seen me wretched, despairing—and never given me a grain of comfort, when he knew this all the time!' answered the curate.

'You are nursing your wrath to keep it warm,' urged Kate smiling. 'That is not like a clergyman, my dear Mr Milton, and far less a beneficed clergyman. You owe it to your future position, Mr Vicar-elect, to set a better example. Well, if you won't listen to me, and good spiritual advice, I must hand you over to the secular arm.—Mary, don't you let him take one kiss until he has promised to forgive Mr Glyn.'

He turned, and beheld Mary standing in the doorway, white even against the snow without, but with a tender blush just budding upon each cheek, which deepened as he gazed from rose to carnation.

'Is this all true, dear Mary?' said he, flushing likewise.

'All quite true, Mr Milton. That I would not let you suffer hurt on my account, should be surely laid entirely to my own credit. Do not then blame Mr Glyn, but me.'

'I will blame neither of you,' said the curate fondly, taking her fragile hand in his, and drawing her towards him.—'Where is friend Maurice?'

'I will go and fetch him,' answered Kate; 'unless,' added she smiling, 'you two have any objection to be left to one another's company.'

And after a reasonable delay, she fetched him, and a cordial reconciliation was effected.

Not on the most brilliant of its picnic-days had the old ruin ever held four happier or more comely lovers. If like had chosen like, Milton the athlete would have mated with round-limbed Kate, Maurice the slender with the faylike Mary; but that is not the way that weddings go.

#### CHAPTER XXXVI.—CONCLUSION.

There remains not very much to be told.

It may be sufficient to state of Richard Anstey, that, endeavouring to supplement his diminished income, by devoting himself more than ever to the pursuits of the turf, he was at first successful: he made a very pretty penny out of his most intimate associates and acquaintances; but your amateur in rascality (as in everything else), notwithstanding that he may let slip no opportunity, and entertain no scruple, has but little chance against the professional, and in the end our astute friend succumbed. With the wreck of his late winnings, he is then said to have set up a betting-house, and issued 'lists' of the most attractive description; but having given the odds too many times over against a certain favourite, who somehow escaped all the attentions in the way of 'nobbling' and 'making him safe' that were prepared for him, and won the Derby, Sir Richard was compelled to 'bolt.' He is now passing his days at Baden-Baden, where his thousand a year, paid quarterly—none of which is frittered away in satisfying his creditors—enables him, together with his title, to cut a very tolerable figure.

The Rev. Charles Milton was in a great hurry to compensate himself for the unjustifiable treatment to which he had been subjected, by immediate wedlock; but Mary had promised Kate that their respective marriages should take place at the same time, and the affairs of so great an heiress as the latter demanding some time for the lawyers to spin their webs about them, there ensued an unavoidable delay. In the meantime, the superannuated vicar was so complacent as to die, and the curate was presented in due course to the vacant living. Now, no sooner was his uncle made aware of this great change in his nephew's fortunes, notwithstanding that the news was coupled with that of his approaching marriage with Mary, than he began to see that matter in quite a different light; what in the curate had seemed a shameful *mésalliance*, became in the incumbent at the worst an eccentric attachment. Finding, in short, that his countenance was in no way necessary to the young couple, he tendered it to them (as is the manner of his kind) full face.

Mary's presents from the manor-house, costly as they were, did not, in magnificence at least, surpass the gift which her unknown relative sent her down from town, and which he would have placed upon her neck with his own hands, but that a fit of the gout (an aristocratic ailment in which he took no small pride) forbade his presence at the wedding. That event is so recent, that we cannot speak with certainty of the happiness of Charles Milton's married life; but we have the utmost faith that he made an excellent choice. His blind father-in-law may seem an encumbrance to some folks, but (since Mary loves him so dearly) not to the vicar; and, for our own parts, we know several mothers-in-law with eyes (and very sharp ones) that are to the full as objectionable.

It is not necessary to describe the weddings. Think, reader, of the most successful and charming event of the kind that lies within your experience, and then double it. The two brides—I really do not know which was the fairest—were a sight to make a poor bachelor wish, I don't say for marriage, but for bigamy.

This subject is too tremendous—too bound up also with existing interests—to be pursued.

Dear Madam made a remarkable observation to her daughter on that wedding morning.

'We cannot have *all* our wishes, darling, and I am sure I have much cause to be thankful; but I do wish that your poor father could have been alive, to know that you had won such a husband as dear Maurice.'

But she never knew that wish had been gratified; never dreamed that a certain grave in Kensal Green knits her daughter's heart to her husband almost as strongly as the tie of love itself.

Kate feels that what she had deemed the greatest misfortune of her life, has somehow worked for good; that all anomalies—all that seemed so hard and unjust—in her lot are reconciled at last; nor does she any longer doubt that, in the eyes of Maurice Glyn, she has brought with her to his bosom as little Shame as Blame.

THE END.

## ACROSS THE WALNUTS AND THE WINE.

In after-dinner talk  
Across the walnuts and the wine.—Tennyson.

WE were talking of Liars the other night, most of us being very severe upon them, and only Bitter Aloes defending them (which is equivalent to blame), when Parson Grey maintained that there were not only two sorts of lies, the white and the other, but two totally distinct descriptions of Fibbers. The one, that well-known and much reprobated class who 'practise to deceive;' and the other, mere slaves to their own imaginations—Novelists spoiled. 'These folks,' said he, 'are unable to construct three-volume works, or even short tales for the magazines; but their instinct for composition is not to be restrained. In the first place, they seldom do any harm, nor, indeed, aim at doing so, except in the case of very Great Personages indeed, who can afford to be abused, and one of whose uses in the world is perhaps to form the raw material for scandalous stories; and secondly, after the third or fourth narration of the same (manufactured) fact, they believe it as firmly as anybody. Then,' urged he, 'there is no more evil in their telling tales than in the colloquial expressions of sailors, who, having caught the habit of strong language, use it, not indeed without reproach, but without the heavy blame which attaches to the colonel yonder, who, even in the presence of Housewife's young people, just now—'

'The boy trod on my toe, my gouty toe,' growled the colonel in mitigation; 'and, besides, it is my opinion that children at dessert are dam—dampers to conversation.'

'They do, without doubt, impose a restraint upon some persons,' said Bitter Aloes, 'though not upon others. There's a famous Lilliputian warehouse kept by Swears and Well, you know—fancy Swears and Well'—

'That's not quite the name, is it?' interrupted Mr Funnidog, who is particular about the exact foundations for the facetiae of other people.

'Sir, I trust you are in the *second* order of individuals in error, as classified by our worthy divine here,' said Aloes savagely—'that you contradict from habit. I wish I could agree with him that such persons do no harm.'

'I did not say they did no harm,' observed the parson; 'I only observed that they were not so blameworthy as are the fraudulent deceivers.'

'I prefer the Liar proper,' contended Aloes; 'the Fibber pure and simple. He has some excuse for his conduct; he makes something by his ingenious devices, and, moreover, you are on your guard against him. But who can be secure against the wretch who invents merely to gratify his imagination? It was only yesterday that I was put to great inconvenience, besides being placed in a most ridiculous position, by one of these persons. He had informed me, in reply to my inquiry as to what was the meaning of the "*Hi Cab, Hi!*" which we see advertised upon the walls, that it meant a cab-call. "*It is a whistle,*" said he, "*of ingenious construction. If you want a Hansom, you whistle once; if you want a Four-wheel, you whistle twice; and the cabmen all understand it, and obey you accordingly.*"

'Well, I thought this a very convenient and practical device; but although I called at various ironmongers, and asked for the new cab-whistle, I could hear nothing about it. They thought it a very good idea, they said, but this was the first time they had heard of it. Now, yesterday, as I was returning from the City on the top of the bus, I caught sight of an emporium where the "*Hi Cab, Hi!*" was advertised to be sold. So I got off—three miles short of my destination—and stepped in to ask for it.

'I want,' said I, "one of your *Hi Cab, His.*" A ridiculous request to make, it is true, but I was tired of asking for cab-calls.

'What size would you please to have it, sir?' inquired the shopman.

'Well, my mouth is not larger than other people's, and I thought this an odd question; but I answered: "*Oh, the usual size.*"

'And what description, sir, as to price?'

'Well, I don't want a gold one set with turquoises,' said I severely. 'Shew me an ordinary specimen.'

'Well, he produced a lantern, with H upon one side of it, for Hansom, and C (for Four-wheel, I suppose) upon the other. If I had been a Brougham, it might have hung on one side of me elegantly enough, but being only a gentleman on his own legs, such a notion was preposterous. "You put this in your window," explained the man, "and the cabmen will stop when they see it. Next winter, there will be a '*Hi Cab, Hi!*' in every window in town, especially after dark. You see, it saves sending a female servant out in the snow."

'It was not without difficulty that I made him understand that I lived in a street which is No Thoroughfare, and that if I waited till an empty cab should pass through it, I should wait for a good many winters. As for a cab-call, the thing, so far as I could learn, had no existence; and yet this second-class Fibber not only invented *that*, but added: "*You whistle once for a Hansom, and twice for a Four-wheel;*" which is a Lie with a couple of circumstances.'

'That was, no doubt, wrong,' said Mr Funnidog; 'but I must confess that the fun of the fib does sometimes atone for its atrocity. Housewife and I

went down to Wimbledon the other day to see our friend Smallbore under canvas. It is very nice going to Camp; the plants and flowers about the tents shew the excellent taste, as the claret-cups evince the judgment, of our gallant Volunteers. Only, one always comes back, on account of that draughty canvas, with the Lumbago. Well, on our return, we *three* were about to step into the train at Putney Station, when an official voice exclaimed: "*Clapham only, Clapham only.*"

"Why, this is surely for Waterloo," exclaimed Housewife as the train began to move. "I'm always so particular to look in the bill."

"Yes, yes," cried a porter; "it's all right; jump in."

"We got in as fast as our companion (the Lumbago) would permit, and began to comment upon the stupidity of the railway people in being of different opinions as to our destination."

"At the next station, two stout old ladies were about to enter our carriage, when the same official voice broke forth with: "*Clapham only, Clapham only.*" Whereupon, "Lor, Sarah, this is not *our* train," said one. "Why, that wicked porter told us it was."

"*Clapham only, Clapham only,*" reiterated the voice. And the two old ladies were about to retire, congratulating themselves at having escaped getting into the wrong train, when Housewife, with his usual politeness, explained matters. I confess I was too suffocated with laughter to do anything of the sort; for I did think it very funny that a sedate-looking person, such as sat at the window of the next carriage, should make it his business and pleasure to utter "*Clapham only, Clapham only*" at every stopping-place with the intention of misleading as many folks as he could."

"I confess," said Housewife severely, "that, in my opinion, such a fellow ought to be whipped. We whip even boys for lying; and yet youth is generally considered a mitigation of crime."

"Falsehood, however," remarked Parson Grey didactically, "is especially distasteful to the young; nature abhors"—

"A vacuum," interrupted Funnidog, "but not necessarily a lie. At least I know at Eton that what used to be called the Eleventh Commandment was: "Tell a Banger, tell a good un, and stick to it."

"And he is an Eton man himself," said Bitter Aloes drily.

"There is a third sort of lie," continued Funnidog, "that seems to have escaped the attention of our reverend friend, yet with which he cannot fail to be familiar, from the example of King Herod. That monarch committed murder, rather than break his word to his wife—an alternative of which, I am sure, we are none of us capable; we would rather break our word to our wives ten times a day. Similarly, there are cases (although not absolutely identical ones) where we are called upon, even by morality, to retract a promise—that is, to tell a lie. A curious example of this occurred of late within my own experience. You all know pretty Mrs Flitter. Well, she and her husband and I were dining together the other day at Greenwich. After dinner, the air being charmingly cool, we agreed to walk from the *Trafalgar* to the railway station; and, short as the distance was, it was sufficient for Mr and Mrs F. to quarrel in. At first, I only heard scraps of the dispute.

"Go back for it, Flitter. I insist upon it."

"Go back for it! No, ma'am, I am not a retriever."

"It is not a thing that I *can* go back for," argued she.

"And yet it's plain that you want it," replied he curtly.

"If you don't go, Flitter, I'll never speak to you again, mind that;" and she meant it too.

"That will be a great loss," said F. sardonically: he had had (at least) his quantum of champagne, and seemed to have quite a will of his own.

"Then she went back without another word.

"What could it be?"

"Flitter and I walked on, the former much cast down; already, doubtless, terrified at the possible consequences of his unprecedented audacity. At last he gave me his confidence in quite a plaintive manner. "Look here, my dear Funnidog; now, don't you think I was right? She has left a front tooth—she has a false one, as perhaps you have observed?"

"No," said I; "never."

"Well, she *had* one, until she left it in the ladies' dressing-room at the *Trafalgar*. And she wanted me to go back for it! The idea of my asking for such an article! Don't you think that people ought always to go back for their own front teeth?"

"I was too convulsed with laughter to give my opinion upon this delicate point, but I nodded.

"Just so," said he; "I will tell her that you quite agreed with me."

"You will not be such a fool, Flitter," replied I, seriously alarmed, "as to say that you have told me one word of this. Come; these quarrels of man and wife are only the renewals of love. We'll wait for her at the station as if nothing had happened."

"We waited, and presently she arrived; but not at all "as if nothing had happened." She took not the slightest notice of either of us, but seated herself in the carriage as though we were total strangers. A handsome young fellow who occupied the next seat paid great attention to her. Speaking under correction, for I know nothing of such matters myself, I should say, indeed, he made love to her. Mrs F. coquetted with him abominably. I could see poor Flitter tearing his hair—pulling them out one at a time from his whiskers—in jealous agony.

"Upon my word and honour," said he afterwards, when we were speaking of this painful scene, "there was one moment when I was within an ace"—

"Yes," interrupted I, "I watched you; you were in a dreadful rage. You were very nearly flying at that young gentleman's throat."

"No, no," said Flitter; "you misunderstand my character. I was within an ace of telling him about her front tooth. *That* would have stopped him."

"Well, as we drew near to the terminus, Mrs F. began to repent of her cruel conduct; signals of conciliation, of mutual forgiveness, passed between her and Flitter.

"We had better take a Hansom, my dear," said the latter.

"But the young man, who had flattered himself he had made so favourable an impression, and who perhaps was really struck with love at first sight for a young lady whose affections seemed (to say the least of them) to be disengaged, was not so



easily got rid of. When Flitter and his wife took their cab, this impressionable youth took another, to the driver of which he gave the annexed address: "Follow that Hansom."

"We drove about," narrated Flitter subsequently, "for no less than three hours. Of course, I was justified in giving our man a false address, under the circumstances (for Flitter is himself a moralist), and I gave him half-a-dozen. At last, the horse in the other Hansom fell down from exhaustion. But the transaction cost me eight shillings in cab-fare, not to mention considerable annoyance to my peace of mind."

"Now, however unjustifiable Mrs Flitter's conduct may have been in other respects," concluded Funnidog, "she was obviously right in breaking her word to her husband as to 'never speaking to him again.'"

### THE MONTH:

#### SCIENCE AND ARTS.

It is now pretty certain that government will have the monopoly of the telegraphs of the kingdom, as it has of the Post-office; it remains for the House of Commons to work out the conditions on which the transfer is to be made, and then the new powers will begin operations. If the public good be as much studied in this case as it is in the management of the Post-office, no one, not even the telegraph directors, will lament the change. But it must not be supposed that railway companies will give up their lines. Generally speaking, they have no more wires than they absolutely require for the proper working of their traffic; hence, when government enter into possession, they may find it necessary to erect many new lines of telegraph. Will they ever come down to penny messages? A scheme has been laid before the Congress at Washington for a government line to connect the federal capital with Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, on which the price of messages shall be one cent—a little less than a halfpenny—a word: and the lowest charge for a message is to be three cents. Should this measure be carried into effect, we may perhaps learn something from American experience.

As is known to readers of scientific literature, the late Professor Edward Forbes wrote a book on the distribution of animal life in the ocean, in which he maintained that there were no living creatures in the deepest parts of the sea. His theory was, that the pressure at the lower depths was too great to allow of existence being carried on—that there was not sufficient light—and that the water contained too little air. This theory has since been called in question, as living things have been brought up by dredging from depths below the limit fixed by Professor Forbes; and it is contended that the smaller amount of light would affect only the colour and organs of vision of the animals in those lower regions of the sea-bottom, and not their capacity for existence; while, as air is very compressible, and water is not, it is more than probable that at great depths the water may be more charged with air than near the surface. Clearly, it

is a case where fresh evidence is wanting; and we have the pleasure to report that an attempt is now making to solve at least a part of the question. The Admiralty having been appealed to by the President and Council of the Royal Society, ordered the *Lightning* steamer to be fitted at Pembroke Dock for a dredging expedition, and Dr Carpenter and Professor Wyville Thomson of Belfast—two well-known naturalists—are now on board the vessel, dredging in the deep water—one thousand fathoms and more—to the westward of the Farøe Islands. This is a very praiseworthy way of employing the long-vacation, and we heartily wish success to the afore-named gentlemen. They will no doubt dredge up many very pale, queer-eyed, and otherwise remarkable animals from 'the deep unfathomed caves;' but for samples of the water at great depths we must wait till apparatus has been constructed which shall bottle them at any depth, and keep them intact during their passage to the surface. If, as is supposed, the deepest water is much overcharged with air, it will behave as soda-water does when uncorked.

Late advices from Australia bring us news of a development of mechanical arts, which can hardly be read without a glow of satisfaction. A paper-mill has been started in the neighbourhood of Melbourne; and though it is not equal to the production of what advertisers call 'high-class stationery,' it turns out good printing-paper, for which, as in the colony of Victoria alone there are some fifty newspapers, the demand should suffice to keep the mill going merrily. At Geelong, a woollen cloth-factory has begun to work; and at the first sale of its products—7000 yards of well-finished cloth of various kinds—disposed of the entire quantity for more than £3000. What a triumph for the townsfolk! Their emotion manifested itself in a practical way, and one tailor alone received orders for ninety suits of the native cloth. In this, one foresees the day when Australia will supply the whole of the southern hemisphere with woollen goods. Let us hope that, with British enterprise, they will couple honesty, and in a country so rich in wool, will never attempt to palm off shoddy as the 'genuine article.'

We mentioned some time ago that electro-magnetism had been applied in the manufacture of steel at Sheffield; to which we may now add that experiments have been carried on for some years in this country, in France, and in Russia, for the production of iron by electricity, and are now successful. By electricity is meant in this case some electro-magnetic or electro-galvanic application. With this, a copper-plate may be coated with steel; but if an attempt is made to increase the thickness of the coat, it crumbles off, and can be reduced to powder. Advantage has been taken of this fact to produce perfectly pure iron, which is largely used in the arts, in the manufacture of fireworks, and for medicinal purposes. Some experimentalists produce iron by operating on solutions of certain salts of iron in which the pure metal is thrown down by the electric action. In

some instances, solid or coherent iron has been obtained, which has peculiar qualities, and can be used for various purposes, particularly those connected with ornamental art. It is remarkable that the iron obtained by some of these processes is unusually hard, will resist acids, and yet is easily malleable. From these instances, we may infer that an important change will one day be made in the method of our iron manufacture—that is, of a special kind of iron. Indeed, we are informed that one of the leading iron-masters in the Black Country is trying, and very confidently, for great results in the production of this, so to speak, new metal. What an enormous saving there would be in the consumption of coal, if we got our supply of iron without using the smelting-furnaces!

Another interesting fact is, that the waste of soda-manufactories is now turned to profit, by being made to give up a considerable quantity of sulphur. The waste matters are subjected to a course of chemical treatment, and out comes the sulphur. English and German chemists, working independently, have accomplished this result. At one establishment in Germany, eight hundred thousand pounds of sulphur were got out of soda-waste in 1866. Trade is said to be dull at present; but a trade which can effect such an economy as this can hardly be other than flourishing.

Electro-plate is familiar to most persons; but a novelty has been recently introduced—namely, electro-plating on paper, linen, silk, muslin, or any fibrous or woven goods. The material is soaked for two hours in a solution of nitrate of silver, is dried, and bathed with hydrogen gas, and is then ready to receive its coat of gold, silver, or copper, as may be required.

The Society of Arts are discussing the question, whether it is better for working-men to take their holidays bit by bit, as most of them do at present, or all in a lump, as is the practice with clerks and persons who hold official positions. There is something to be said on both sides; but it is well known that if a man takes six holidays of a day each in the course of a year, he, in most instances, spoils the six succeeding days; whereas, with a week's holiday, he would come thoroughly ready for work, or would at least spoil only one day. It would be well for all concerned if the Society of Arts or some other Society would inspire working-men with a love for their work, or persuade them to do it with heartiness, instead of the selfish way which some of them follow, and in which their chief thought is to contrive that their masters shall get as little as possible by their labour. Instead of working with spirit, they work at a regulation pace; and if an honest man comes among them, striving to do his best, he is very soon made to feel that quickness is forbidden by the rules of the trade. This want of conscientiousness among working-men is deplorable. Would that the Society of Arts could take up *this* question, and work it out to a satisfactory solution!

The Royal Geographical Society have resolved to offer every year two gold and two bronze medals to competitors who pass an examination in physical and political geography, of which particulars will be published in due time. We may mention here that the Society, who have long been cramped for room in their present quarters, are to have a site on the Thames Embankment, where they will build themselves a house spacious enough for all their requirements.

### TOO LATE!

AND so she has passed away from this world of sighs  
and tears;  
Buried with kindred dust, 'neath the shade of the dark  
yew-tree:  
She, the dream of my life, through the mazy length of  
years—  
She, with her smiles of peace, like the calm of a  
crimsoned sea.

You tell me I am too late; she has gone to the Silent  
Land;  
Too late for the last farewell of her whom I loved of  
yore:  
She has entered on death's lone sea, while here in my  
grief I stand,  
Piercing the gathering gloom from a cold and dreary  
shore.

We parted two summers ago, in the twilight soft and  
still,  
We kissed by the garden gate, 'neath the bright labur-  
num-tree;  
With the lustrous evening-star o'ertopping the distant  
hill,  
And the moonbeams all asleep in the calm of the azure  
sea.

Often since then, on the deck, I have gazed with tearful  
eyes,  
Long on these tokens of love—that picture and lock of  
hair;  
Then I've softly murmured her name 'neath the calm of  
the star-lit skies,  
And fervently breathed it to God in the voice of my  
evening-prayer.

Too late!—she is now 'neath the mould, in her silent  
and holy rest:  
I almost dreaded as much as we slowly entered the  
bay;  
For a languishing feeling of grief kept lingering round  
my breast,  
Like the overwhelming haze of a hot and sultry day.

Too late!—yet not too late!—to hear that her latest  
breath  
Was spent in breathing my name when her soul had  
almost flown:  
Oh! not too late to hear of a love that outlives death,  
And opens the door of a tender heart to one and one  
alone!

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Next Saturday will be published the beginning  
of a new Novel, entitled

### FOUND DEAD,

By the Author of 'BLONDEL PARVA.'

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